

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 5

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By: **Senators Kelley, Augustine, Feldman, Hayes, Hershey, Lam, and Washington**
Introduced and read first time: February 3, 2020
Assigned to: Finance

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A Senate Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Congressional Action – Surprise Billing – Air Ambulance**

3 FOR the purpose of urging the U.S. Congress to pass legislation that prohibits the balance
4 billing of consumers by certain air ambulances; providing that a copy of this
5 resolution be sent by the Department of Legislative Services to certain individuals;
6 and generally relating to balance billing of consumers by air ambulances.

7 WHEREAS, A 2019 report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office stated that
8 approximately two-thirds of air ambulance transports were out-of-network in 2017; and

9 WHEREAS, The same report stated that such out-of-network transports may result
10 in the balance billing of a consumer for charges not covered by the consumer's insurance
11 carrier; and

12 WHEREAS, Maryland consumers are at risk of being balance billed by
13 out-of-network air ambulances; and

14 WHEREAS, In 2019, the Health Care Cost Institute reported that the average price
15 of an air ambulance trip increased substantially from 2008 to 2017, rising 144% (from
16 \$11,414 in 2008 to \$27,894 in 2017) for helicopters and 166% (from \$15,684 in 2008 to
17 \$41,674 in 2017) for airplanes; and

18 WHEREAS, The cost of the balance bills can be catastrophic to the finances of
19 individuals and families; and

20 WHEREAS, The federal 1978 Airline Deregulation Act preempts state-level
21 economic regulation of air carriers, which includes air ambulances; and

22 WHEREAS, The General Assembly of Maryland is unable to protect Maryland
23 consumers from balance billing by air ambulances; now, therefore, be it

24 **RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the General**



SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 5

1 Assembly of Maryland urges the U.S. Congress to pass legislation that prohibits the
2 balance billing of consumers by air ambulances that do not participate in a consumer's
3 insurance carrier network; and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
5 Legislative Services to:

6 (1) the Honorable Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr., Governor of Maryland; the
7 Honorable William C. Ferguson, IV, President of the Senate of Maryland; and the
8 Honorable Adrienne A. Jones, Speaker of the House of Delegates; and

9 (2) the Maryland Congressional Delegation: Senators Benjamin L. Cardin
10 and Christopher Van Hollen, Jr., Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510; and
11 Representatives Andrew P. Harris, C. A. Dutch Ruppersberger III, John P. Sarbanes,
12 Anthony G. Brown, Steny Hamilton Hoyer, David J. Trone, Elijah E. Cummings, and Jamie
13 Raskin, House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.